

I. Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of the claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

A. Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A document structure inspection method comprising the step of:

applying a document structure alteration rule, which is stored by storage means, to a first document structure definition ~~expressing the structure of a structured document written in a document structure definition language~~ to express the structure of a structured document for the purpose of effecting conversion to generate a second document structure definition;

wherein said document structure alteration rule includes a replacement rule for setting a document structure definition element name that is to be replaced in accordance with an element name contained in a document structure definition targeted for application and/or an addition rule for setting a document structure definition element name that is to be added ~~in accordance with the end of~~ corresponding to an element name contained in a document structure definition targeted for application, wherein said conversion creates said second document structure definition by replacing a specified element with an element set in a document structure definition stored in said storage means when an element name targeted for application, which is set in said replacement rule, appears in said first document structure definition, and/or by adding ~~a~~ an element set in the document structure definition ~~element~~, which is stored in said storage means, ~~at a predetermined location after~~ corresponding to a specified element when an element name

targeted for application, which is set in said addition rule, appears in said first document structure definition; and

conducting an inspection on an individual element name basis to determine whether said second document structure definition is consistent with a corresponding structured document ~~structure definition stored in said storage means.~~

2. (Original) The document structure inspection method according to claim 1, wherein said replacement rule is applied to an element of said first document structure definition corresponding to an encrypted portion of said structured document for the purpose of effecting conversion to generate a corresponding document structure definition element.

3. (Currently Amended) The document structure inspection method according to claim 1, wherein ~~a document structure definition~~ the element added by applying said addition rule is an element that corresponds to a digital signature affixed to said structured document.

4. (Currently Amended) The document structure inspection method according to claim 1, wherein said first document structure definition corresponds to the structure definition of an electronically signed document, and wherein ~~a document structure definition~~ the element added by applying said addition rule is a structure definition element of a document targeted for a digital signature.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Original) The document structure inspection method according to claim 1, wherein the name of said document structure definition has an extension indicating the type of document structure definition language in which said document structure definition is written,

and wherein a step for said inspection is performed in accordance with said document structure definition language indicated by said extension.

7. (Currently Amended) A document structure inspection apparatus, comprising:
a document structure definition converter for applying a document structure alteration rule stored by storage means to a first document structure definition, ~~which expresses the structure of a structured document~~ written in a document structure definition language to express the structure of a structured document, for the purpose of effecting conversion to generate a second document structure definition; and

a document structure inspection unit for conducting an inspection on an individual element name basis to determine whether said second document structure definition is consistent with a corresponding structured ~~document structure definition stored in said storage means~~;

wherein said document structure alteration rule includes a replacement rule, which sets a document structure definition element name that is to be replaced in accordance with an element name contained in a document structure definition targeted for application, and/or an addition rule, which sets a document structure definition element name that is to be added ~~in accordance with the end of~~ corresponding to an element name contained in a document structure definition targeted for application; and

wherein said document structure definition converter comprises means for replacing a specified element by an element set in a document structure definition stored in said storage means when an element name targeted for application, which is set in said replacement rule, appears in said first document structure definition, and/or means for adding ~~a~~ an element set in the document structure definition element stored in said storage means ~~to~~ at a predetermined

location ~~after~~ corresponding to a specified element when an element name targeted for application, which is set in said addition rule, appears in said first document structure definition.

8. (Original) The document structure inspection apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said document structure definition converter applies said replacement rule to an element of said first document structure definition, which corresponds to an encrypted portion of said structured document, in order to effect conversion to generate a corresponding document structure definition element.

9. (Currently Amended) The document structure inspection apparatus according to claim 7, wherein ~~a document structure definition~~ the element added by applying said addition rule is an element that corresponds to a digital signature affixed to said structured document.

10. (Currently Amended) The document structure inspection apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said first document structure definition corresponds to the structure definition of an electronically signed document, and wherein ~~a document structure definition~~ the element added by applying said addition rule is a structure definition element of a document targeted for a digital signature.

11. (Cancelled).

12. (Original) The document structure inspection apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the name of said document structure definition has an extension indicating the type of document structure definition language in which said document structure definition is written, and wherein said document structure inspection unit conducts an inspection in accordance with said document structure definition language indicated by said extension.

13. (Currently Amended) A program for causing a computer to implement a conversion function for applying a document structure alteration rule stored by storage means to a first document structure definition, ~~which expresses the structure of a structured document~~ written in a document structure definition language to express the structure of a structured document, for the purpose of effecting conversion to generate a second document structure definition, and an inspection function for conducting an inspection on an individual element name basis to determine whether said second document structure definition is consistent with a corresponding structured ~~document structure definition stored in said storage means~~;

wherein said document structure alteration rule includes a replacement rule, which sets a document structure definition element name that is to be replaced in accordance with an element name contained in a document structure definition targeted for application, and/or an addition rule, which sets a document structure definition element name that is to be added ~~in accordance with the end of~~ corresponding to an element name contained in a document structure definition targeted for application; and

wherein said conversion function includes a function for replacing a specified element by an element set in a document structure definition stored in said storage means when an element name targeted for application, which is set in said replacement rule, appears in said first document structure definition, and/or a function for adding a an element set in the document structure definition ~~element~~ stored in said storage means ~~to~~ at a predetermined location after corresponding to a specified element when an element name targeted for application, which is set in said addition rule, appears in said first document structure definition.

14. (Cancelled).

15. (New) The document structure inspection method according to claim 1, wherein the document structure alteration rule includes a relevant document structure definition, and the conversion step incorporates the relevant document structure definition corresponding to the specified element into said second document structure definition when applying the document structure alteration rule.

16. (New) A document structure inspection method comprising the steps of:
conducting a first inspection on an individual element name basis to determine whether a structured document is consistent with a corresponding first document structure definition written in a document structure definition language;

in the case that an inconsistency occurs during the first inspection, suspending the first inspection and searching a document structure alteration rule library that is a collection of a plurality of document structure alteration rules for an applicable document structure alteration rule based on an inconsistent element name that appears in the structured document;

wherein said document structure alteration rule sets a name of a second document structure definition corresponding to the inconsistent element name;

conducting a second inspection on an individual element name basis by use of a second document structure definition corresponding to the inconsistent element name in a document structure alteration rule found through the search; and

when the second inspection has reached the end of the second document structure definition, resuming the first inspection from a point to return of the first document structure definition.